

Occupational Health in South and South East Asia

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SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA



Map not to scale

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Working Population

- The active work-force comprises of approximately 630 million in the Region
- Out of this active population, about 60% are males and 40% females
- The three major economic sectors are agriculture, industry and services
- Agriculture: includes forestry and fishing and also is the major sector providing employment to 65% of active workforce in the Region.

Employment

- **Agriculture and Fisheries:**
 - Nepal 85%,
 - Bhutan 75%,
 - Myanmar 69%,
 - India 58%
- **Service sector:** approximately 20% of the active workforce
- **Industries:** Approx. 15% of the work-force (mining , quarrying, construction, repair and demolition, commerce and manufacturing)

Sectors

- **Formal**

- Large organizations with well organized occupational health services (OHS)
- Organizations with less organized OHS
- Comes under a formal law, but with flaws and barriers in implementation

- **Informal**

- NO law / No OHS

Legislation

- Old Regulations and Acts
 - **India** (Factories Ordinance of The Factories Act, 1948, the Mines Act, 1952)
 - **Pakistan** (Factories Act 1934)
 - **Sri Lanka** (Factories Act 1952) [drafting new law]
- Newer laws
 - **Malaysia** (Occ Safety and Health Act of 1994)
 - **Singapore** (The Workplace Safety and Health Act 2006)
 - **Brunei** (Safety and Health Order 2009) – passed in Parliament

Issues

- The occupational health burden in the South-East Asia Region (SEAR) remains largely uncharacterized.
- Major incidents have occurred in this region
- Workers of the Region are exposed to a wider range of occupational hazards and risks including chemical, physical and biological hazards as well as improper ergonomics and high psychosocial stress

Issues (Contd.)

- Most countries in the Region are in the process of **rapid economic development**, a process that potentially amplifies the pre-existing traditional risks and **introduces new occupational risks in the Region**
- They often lack the basic knowledge of hazards and personal protection and work for long hours in unsafe work conditions with little or no health care or insurance
- **Improper or no reporting is a major issue**

Reported vs. Estimated cases of Fatal and Nonfatal Work related Accidents in Asia Pacific Countries

Country	Fatality due to accidents	Estimated deaths	% Reported vs. Estimates
Australia	919	1035	89
Japan	1,790	2016	89
New Zealand	69	78	88
Malaysia	958	1207	79
Republic of Korea	1,298	2214	59
Singapore	52	178	29
China	12,736	90,295	14
Thailand	597	6953	9
Sri Lanka	27	2157	1
India	222	40,133	1

Industry in the Indian Subcontinent



Agriculture in the Region



Asbestos workers India



Pesticide spraying in Asia



Pesticide spraying Tea plantation



Aircraft spraying – when landing in the tropics



Future and challenges

WHO Ten Strategies

1. Strengthening of international and national policies for health at work and developing the necessary policy tools;
2. Development of healthy work environment;
3. Development of healthy work practices and promotion of health at work;
4. Strengthening of occupational health services (OHS)
5. Establishment of support services for occupational health;
6. Development of occupational health standards based on scientific risk assessment;

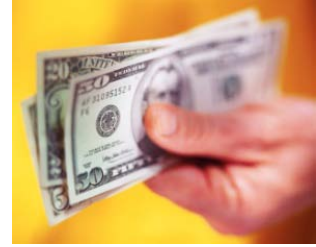
WHO Strategies (Contd)

- 7. **Development of human resources** for occupational health;
- 8. **Establishment of registration and data systems**, development of information services for experts, effective transmission of data and raising of public awareness through public information;
- 9. **Strengthening of research**, and
- 10. **Development of collaboration** in occupational health and with other activities and services

Concerns

- Strategies are good and workable on paper
- Are Countries ready to change?
- Infrastructure status (financial / human resources)
 - Human resources (Training and willingness to move into the specialty)
- Political will? (Asbestos as an example)

ASEAN-OSH Challenges



- Funding;
- Development & maintenance of sufficient & competent manpower;
- Acquisition & maintenance of adequate & up-to-date equipment and facilities
- Establishment & maintenance of adequate information management systems
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) do not suit ASEAN climate or physical features and budget.
- New materials, processes & technology give rise to new health hazards.

Thank you....